

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9054

INFO AMEMBASSY TUNIS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T ROME 12001

EXDIS

DEPT PASS DOD/JCS AND ISA

DEPT PASS CINCUSNAVEUR, COMSIXTHFLT AND EUCOM (ALSO FOR POLADS)

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, TU, LY, US

SUBJECT: TUNISIA URGES INCREASED U.S. NAVAL PRESENCE

REF: TUNIS 5177

1. REFTTEL SUGGESTS POSSIBILITY PROVISION U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT FOR AIR RECONNAISSANCE AS PART OF INCREASED U.S. SUPPORT FOR TUNISIA PRIOR TO AND DURING POSSIBLE FORTHCOMING CRISIS. AMONG SURVEILLANCE ASSETS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FOR POSSIBLE CONSIDERATION MAY BE USN P-3'S BASED AT SIGONELLA, SICILY. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT THE USE OF NEITHER THESE NOR ANY OTHER AIRCRAFT BASED IN ITALY BE CONTEMPLATED IN THAT CONTEXT.

2. EVEN UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES THE GOVERNMENT OF ITALY WOULD NOT LOOK WITH FAVOR UPON THE USE OF TENANT U.S. FORCES IN ANY WAY THAT WOULD PROVOKE LIBYA (OR ANY ARAB STATE FOR THAT MATTER). THOUGH THE GOI FORTERS NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT QADHAFI, IT IS HEAVILY DEPENDENT UPON ARAB OIL (ABOUT 13 PERCENT FROM LIBYA IN 1975) AND BELIEVES THAT ITALIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS REQUIRE THAT MAINTAINING OF HARMONIOUS RELATIONS WITH THE RIPARIAN STATES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN. MOREOVER, THESE ARE NOT "THE BEST OF CIRCUM-

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STATNCES". THE CURRENT ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE IS NOT THE

BEST ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO FORCE THE GOI TO MAKE DIFFICULT
POLITICAL CHOICES. THE OUTCOME IN OUR VIEW WOULD BE TO
PLACE IN JEOPARDY CONTINUED USE OF THE MILITARY FACILITIES
WE NOW ENJOY IN ITALY FOR PURPOSES BEYOND STRICTLY NATO
FUNCTIONS. VOLPE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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NNN

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